

Kansas

SENTINEL

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A photograph of two soldiers in riot gear during training. The soldier in the foreground is wearing a helmet with a visor and a tactical vest with the name 'HEATH' on it. He is holding a large, clear riot shield and a baton. The soldier in the background is also in riot gear and holding a riot shield. The background is a hazy, outdoor setting.

**SOLDIERS GEAR
UP FOR CIVIL
DISTURBANCE
TRAINING**

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On the Cover

Simulated gas cloaks Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery as they prepare to take a stance against simulated rioters as part of civil disturbance training at the Great Plains Joint Training Center in Salina, Kansas, Oct. 24, 2015. Photo by Spc. Mikayla Gentine, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

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Editor, *Kansas Sentinel*,

105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment,
2722 SW Topeka Blvd., Topeka, KS 66611

Telephone: 785-274-1896, or by e-mail at:
jessica.barnett3.mil@mail.mil

Assistant Adjutant General-Land Component

Brig. Gen. Robert Windham

Publisher

Cpt. Michael Sullivan, 105th MPAD commander

Editor-in-Chief

Capt. Margaret Ziffer

Associate Editors

Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Barnett, Sgt. Zach Sheely

Graphic Design and Layout

Capt. Michael Sullivan

Sgt. Zach Sheely

Sgt. Brandon Jacobs

FROM THE COMMANDER



I am proud to announce that the KSARNG will soon begin the full integration of women into our ranks. As part of this process, we will open all military occupational specialties, career fields and branches to women. This is a momentous event for the Army, and the KSARNG will lead from the front in effecting this positive change.

In early December 2015, the Secretary of Defense directed the full integration of women in the armed forces of the United States. The Army provided its final, detailed implementation plan for doing so to the Secretary of Defense by the first of January. The Army, including the KSARNG, began the full integration of women into the force earlier this year.

The full integration of women into the force is the result of extensive research, analysis and scrutiny spanning the past several years. Some of this research was even conducted right here in our great state, with the University of Kansas exploring the potential barriers and benefits of integrating females into the Army Special Forces on behalf of the United States Special Operations Command. More importantly than what any research could show is the fact that more than 280,000 women have deployed and served alongside men in our most recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our sisters in arms once again have proven themselves on the battle-

field and therefore all Soldiers, regardless of gender, will be allowed to serve in any occupational specialty for which they are qualified.

The full integration of women will increase the effectiveness and combat readiness of the KSARNG. Yet, as in all personnel actions, adherence to a merit-based system must continue to be paramount. This integration provides equal opportunity for men and women who can perform the tasks required, but it does not guarantee women will fill roles in any specific numbers.

That said, the KSARNG is no stranger to talented female Soldiers and leaders. Our next generation of female Soldiers can look directly to shining examples already serving with distinction in our ranks. Chief Warrant Officer 2 Carol S. Sprawka became the very first female field artillery warrant office in the entire National Guard two years ago, after serving 22 years as an enlisted field artillery Soldier. The current and former commanders of the 235th Regiment, Colonels Carla F. Hale and Judith D. Martin, respectively, are among our most valued leadership assets. 1st Lt. Vanessa Osborne recently served as a platoon leader in Battery A, 2-130th Field Artillery, and is in the process of completing the Field Artillery Captains Career Course.

These are just a few of the many gifted female Soldiers and leaders currently in our formations, but the future is bright for many others. The Reserve Officer Training Corps program at the University of Kansas has commissioned, and Pittsburg State will soon commission, female field artillery officers for the KSARNG. And I would be remiss if I did not recognize trailblazing females from our past, such as retired Command Sgt. Maj. Jana Harrison, the first female CSM in the KSARNG, who retired in 2006 after more than 30 years of distinguished service.

As with any significant and valuable change, there will be challenges to overcome. However, I fully expect all of our talented Soldiers and leaders to tackle any such challenges head on. Specific guidance will be refined and issued as necessary.

Very Respectfully,

Robert Windham

Brig. Gen. Robert Windham
Kansas Army National Guard Commander
Assistant Adjutant General-Army

A BRIGHT FUTURE

ARMENIAN PEACEKEEPING
FORCES EARN NATO COMBAT
READINESS CERTIFICATION
WITH ASSISTANCE FROM
KANSAS NATIONAL GUARD

Story and photos by Sgt. Zach Sheely, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



YEREVAN, Armenia - After a nearly decade-long process working closely with the Kansas National Guard, the Armenian Peacekeeping Brigade earned certification as a NATO partner following a large-scale exercise in the Republic of Armenia Sept. 15-18, 2015.

The brigade earned the accreditation by passing NATO Evaluation Level 2 of the Operational Capabilities Concept of NATO's Partnership for Peace program. The endorsement certifies Armenia's capabilities to support NATO peacekeeping operations worldwide and adds them to the NATO Pool of Forces.

The exercise was the culmination of a long cooperative process between the Armenian brigade and their partners in the Kansas National Guard. Kansas and Armenia have been partners under the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program since 2003.

The State Partnership Program builds relationships

between a state's National Guard and the armed forces or equivalent of a partner country in a cooperative, mutually-beneficial relationship.

Prior to the evaluated exercise, the brigade went through a full-scale rehearsal July 27-Aug. 7, 2015, in the stark landscape of the Zar Mountain Training Center, near Yerevan, Armenia, with assistance from nine counterparts with the Kansas National Guard.

"Instead of being a subordinate unit during NATO peacekeeping operations, they could actually run bases and be partner nation at the same level as the other NATO countries," said Kansas Army National Guard



Armenian Peacekeeping Soldiers prepare for an another onslaught from mock protesters during a riot-control exercise Sept. 17, 2015, in the Republic of Armenia.

Command Sgt. Maj. Greg Kober, NATO Operational Capabilities Concept evaluator.

To prepare, the soldiers rehearsed medical techniques and field procedures; infantry movements and drills; convoy operations; crowd and riot control; civil-military cooperation. The staff refined logistical practices and perfected documentation and doctrine.

"Tactically and technically, they've got skills and they can do a lot of the stuff we would expect them to do," said Maj. Rodney Seaba, who served as a subject matter expert on infantry and intelligence operations. "But the certification just gives them credibility worldwide."

Command and control, communication, logistics, tactics, techniques and procedures were all under the microscope during the evaluated exercise in September.

The exercise scenario played out over the course of 76 hours as Armenian soldiers were evaluated in three phases beginning with an in-barracks inspection focused on reviewing the units' documentation and plans followed by a field inspection and live exercise

"NATO IS EXTREMELY GRATEFUL THAT THE KANSAS NATIONAL GUARD HAS SUCH A CLOSE COOPERATION TO ARMENIA."

LT. COL. INGO SCHOEPPLER,
NATO MONITOR

Four evaluation teams analyzed the various metrics and performance measures under the close supervision of a team of NATO monitors representing Germany, Austria, Ukraine, France and Sweden.

The brigade was evaluated according to NATO standards to ensure

operational readiness.

Lt. Col. Ingo Schoeppler, Armed Forces of Germany, who served as a NATO monitor, noted the improvements he saw.

"We witnessed that the Peacekeeping Brigade is in great shape with motivated, well-trained, young and experienced soldiers and are a very strong partner to the NATO alliance," Schoeppler said.

Schoeppler also credited the Kansas National Guard's efforts in helping Armenia in this certification process.

"NATO is extremely grateful that the Kansas National Guard has such a close cooperation to Armenia and especially to this peacekeeping brigade," said Schoeppler. "The Kansas National Guard plays a crucial part in the success and improvement of the capacity and capabilities of the unit."

"The peacekeeping brigade has improved vastly," said Lt. Col. Richard Fisher, officer in charge of the



Maj. Tom Warth, deputy operations officer, 35th Infantry Division, strategizes with Armenian Peacekeeping Soldiers during a military movement drill at the Zar Training Center in the Republic of Armenia, July 28, 2015.

Maj. Rodney Seaba (center-right), officer personnel manager, Kansas National Guard, observes a control point exercise Jul7 27, 2015, with his Armenian Peacekeeping Brigade counterparts.

KSARNG OCC team. “My first time in Armenia was in 2003. One thing that hasn’t changed is the motivation, professionalism and dedication of the soldiers.”

Fisher worked closely with Armenian Lt. Col. Armen Martirosyan in evaluating staff procedures.

“There’s a huge improvement both in procedures and paperwork, and performance as well,” said Martirosyan. “From my personal point of view, I’m very happy with what we’ve seen this year.”

Master Sgt. Samantha Wier, who has served as logistics subject matter expert on a number of information sharing trips to Armenia, also remarked on the improvement in Armenia’s forces.

“I’ve seen tremendous progress,” said Wier. “The Armenian army has their own version of how they manage to do things, but they have come a very long way in embracing the NATO tac-

tics and paperwork, supply chain and systems that were unfamiliar to them.”

As partners, lessons learned go both ways.

“As much information, knowledge and military experience we gain from them,” said Armenian Capt. Tigran Hunanyan, “we also have things that

“IT’S ALSO ABOUT PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS THAT WE’RE ESTABLISHING FOR THE FUTURE AND FOR NOW TOO.”

**CAPT. TIGRAN HUNANYAN
ARMENIAN PKB**

they are interested in and would like to know about us as a different culture and military.”

Those differences can be an essential reminder of what’s truly important.

“When I look at the (Armenian) soldiers out here and see how motivated they are and how hard they’re

working, it makes me want to go home and do the same stuff,” said Seaba. “It’s a reminder that training really is the most important thing.”

Working side by side, there is more to the Kansas-Armenia partnership than just training.

“I enjoy working with my Armenian counterparts,” she said. “They enjoy practicing English with us. They’re very jovial, very smart in their fields. I’ve learned so many things that I can take back with me for my logistics career.”

“It’s not just about military, it’s also about personal relationships that we’re establishing for the future and for now too,” said Hunanyan. “It’s a great opportunity for us and our (Kansas) counterparts to work together and to learn from each other. If we keep sharing with each other, that will enhance our cultural imagination of one another and will also make us better soldiers.”

Kansas National Guard Hall of Fame recognizes inductee for service, distinction



Retired Col. Ralph Runnebaum, accompanied by his wife Judy, is officially inducted into the Kansas National Guard Hall of Fame by Maj. Gen. Lee Tafari, Adjutant General of Kansas. Photo by Cpt. Margaret Ziffer, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

By Capt. Margaret Ziffer
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Retired Col. Ralph D. Runnebaum became the 107th name added to the list of honorary service members enshrined in the Museum of the Kansas National Guard Hall of Fame during an induction ceremony Nov. 8, 2015, at the Ramada Inn in Topeka.

Runnebaum is a decorated Vietnam combat veteran with more than 32 years of service. His career included enlisted and commissioned service. He commanded at the company, battalion and brigade level before his retirement as the chief of staff, Kansas Army National Guard.

Maj. Gen. Lee Tafari, the adjutant general, remarked during the ceremony that Runnebaum's efforts in the maintenance community have made immeasurable contributions to shaping the Kansas National Guard that exists today.

"He taught me about supporting our Soldiers. One of the key things that he

made sure of is that his staff and your equipment was always ready so that you could draw it, it was ready to go and that you could train on it," said Tafari.

"On behalf of the people of Kansas, thank you for everything that you have done for the country and for the Kansas National Guard. And thank you for reminding us of what true nobility and what dedicating our lives to something bigger than ourselves is all about."

While anyone who has had at least three years since their separation from the Kansas Guard may be nominated for the honor, the process is designed to narrow down the number of inductees per year.

The Hall of Fame, established by the National Guard Association of Kansas, commemorates and recognizes individuals who have served in the Kansas National Guard or its predecessor "Kansas State Militia" and who have made a significant contribution to the National Guard achievements, tradition or history.

After nominations are submitted, they go to a selection committee and are finally sent to the Board of Governors for final approval.

"We try to really keep the integrity of the process so that the people [that are inducted] really deserve to be there," explained retired Lt. Col. Melvin "Doug" Jacobs, Chairman of the Board of Governors since 2005. "The military record is part of it, but also the civilian record. What has the individual done in their community that's brought credit on the National Guard? What did they do to contribute to the community?"

Jacobs remarked that induction into the Hall of Fame is one of the highest honors for National Guardsmen because inductees are selected by their peers. "The nominations have to say something, they have to show why that individual should go into the Hall of Fame. If you are nominated, and if you are selected, it should be one of the highest honors that you have," Jacobs said.

In addition to thanking the officers, enlisted, warrant officers, and civilians he has served with over the course of his 40-plus years of military service, Col Runnebaum thanked his wife, children,

and family for their support.

"When you put your heart and soul into things, you are going to miss a lot of the family get-togethers, boys' basketball and football games, daughters' dance recitals. You miss a lot," Runnebaum said. "I feel so proud today, and rewarded, that I will become a member of this distinguished group."

Retired Col. Ralph Runnebaum

Runnebaum was commissioned as a second lieutenant from the Kansas National Guard Officer Candidate School in July 1966 and attended the Ordinance Officer Basic Course. In 1968 he was mobilized with the 69th Infantry Brigade and was sent to Fort Carson, Colorado, where he was levied for Vietnam and assigned as the battalion maintenance officer, 7th Psychological Operations Group, United States Army Pacific in Vietnam. He remained in this position until December 1969. After being released from active duty, he returned to the Kansas National Guard.

Other assignments include company commander, personnel officer and executive officer for the 169th Support Battalion. He served in several principal staff positions before being selected to command the 287th Maintenance Battalion. After command, he was assigned as the intel/operations executive officer and deputy chief of staff, Headquarters, State Area Command. Ultimately, Runnebaum was assigned as the chief of staff of the Kansas Army National Guard.

Runnebaum will most likely be remembered for his contribution to the maintenance programs of the Army National Guard and the United States Army. He was the director of the Mobilization and Training Equipment Site at Fort Riley, Kansas, for 13 years. After retirement from the Kansas National Guard, he became the civilian cite manager for the RETRO Europe Maintenance Program. From this experience, he was selected as the National Guard Bureau's oversight manager for the Readiness Sustainment Maintenance Program.

Braden takes command of 35th Infantry Division



Maj. Gen. Victor J. Braden (right) receives the command flag of the 35th Infantry Division from Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy Newton, the division's senior noncommissioned officer, signifying his new role as commander of the 35th during a change of command ceremony held at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, on March 6. Watching the exchange are outgoing commander Maj. Gen. Michael Navrkal, and Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general (background). *Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Mark Hanson, 35th Infantry Division Public Affairs*

Maj. Gen. Victor J. Braden, deputy commanding general of the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, received command of the 35th Infantry Division in a change of command ceremony March 6. at the Lewis and Clark Center, Fort Leavenworth.

"I am honored to be selected for command and I look forward to leading the 35th Infantry Division in this complex and challenging world," said Braden.

"It's been an honor to lead the dedicated Soldiers of the 35th Infantry Division during the past 29 months," said Maj. Gen. Michael Navrkal, outgoing commander of the division. "The Citizen-Soldiers of the 35th have never wavered in their commitment to being ready if our state and nation called and it's been equally heartening to witness the unwavering support we receive from our families and employers.

"I know Major General Braden is the right person to lead this fine organization well into the future and wish him my best as he takes command."

The 35th Infantry Division is one of eight divisions in the Army National Guard. In addition to Kansas, it has subordinate major commands in Georgia, Illinois, Missouri, Oklahoma and South Carolina.

Braden, Lawrence, has more than 30 years of military service with commands at the company, battalion and brigade level and three combat tours in the Persian Gulf, Bosnia and Afghanistan.

He is the recipient of the Bronze Star Medal with oak leaf cluster, Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters, Army Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters, Army Achievement Medal with four oak leaf clusters and numerous other awards and decorations.

In his civilian career, Braden is the deputy Kansas attorney general in charge of the Criminal Litigation Division, prosecuting homicide, child predator, illicit drug manufacturing and distribution and public corruption cases.

Navrkal has been commander of the 35th Infantry Division since September 2013. Prior to that appointment, Navrkal was assistant adjutant general - Army for the Nebraska National Guard with a dual-hat assignment as deputy commanding general for Operations with First Army, Division West.

Navrkal's awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, Bronze Star, Medal Meritorious Service Medal with four oak leaf clusters, Army Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Army Achievement Medal with two oak leaf clusters and many other awards.

WICHITA TO WEST POINT

Former sunflower Army Guardsman graduates from U.S. Military Academy

By Sgt. Zach Sheely
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

On May 21, 2016, approximately 1,200 U.S. Military Academy cadets tossed their hats high into the air as graduates of the illustrious institution at West Point, New York, and commissioned as second lieutenants – future leaders in the U.S. Army.

Each graduating cadet arrived at West Point from a different background, but only one came from the Kansas National Guard.

An active participant in extracurricular activities in high school with a 3.2 GPA and ACT score of 28 would make for a competitive candidate for admission into West Point. Add the discipline, leadership and military experience gained from U.S. Army Basic and Advanced Individual Training and while on deployment, and Aron Ochsner was the ideal candidate.

Ochsner, of Wichita, Kansas, joined the Kansas National Guard to serve close to home and become a commissioned officer through the Reserve Officers' Training Corps while attending college locally.

"My goal had always been to become an officer in the Army," said Ochsner. "I chose to enlist in the Kansas Guard to stay in the state around friends and family while I worked on a degree and commission through the Simultaneous Membership Program at Kansas State University."

When he raised his right hand and swore the oath of enlistment in February 2011, he hadn't imagined joining the "Long Gray Line" as a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy a mere five years later, but he graduates this month as a second lieutenant with a Bachelor of Science in international affairs.

Ochsner credits his service as a Kansas Army National Guard Soldier for his admission into West Point and his success as a cadet while there.

"I don't know if I would have gotten in (to the USMA) right after high school," he said. "The first thing you do here is go through West Point's version of basic



training. Because I already had that foundation, it was easy for me to help other people out. It gave me a head start to help out and refine skills that I had already acquired as a Guard Soldier."

He learned of the USMA's Soldier Admission Program while deployed to the Horn of Africa in Djibouti as a field artillery automated tactical data system specialist with Battery C, 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery, Newton, Kansas. Ochsner had previously expressed his intention in becoming an officer to his leadership.

"I wasn't shy about my goals after the deployment," said Ochsner. "My chain of command came to me to inform me of the opportunity to attend West Point."

Maj. Mike McCoy, former 1-161 FA deployment logistics officer, said that West Point encourages Army and reserve-component units to advise Soldiers of the Soldier Admission Program.

Per USMA.edu: "West Point believes Soldiers enhance the Corps of Cadets, and we value the life experiences you have earned as a Soldier. If you want to be an officer in the U.S. Army, West Point will give you an excellent education and the training you need to lead Soldiers as you continue to serve."

"We did a database query on battalion Soldiers who were qualified," said McCoy, himself a graduate of the USMA, Class of 1997. "They had to be 17-22 years of age

with no dependents. Once we had that list, we sent that to the battery commanders to present the opportunity to those who qualified.

"We had a meeting one afternoon and about 15 Soldiers showed up. I told them what West Point was all about as far as the academics, the challenges and what kind of opportunities await a West Point graduate."

Ochsner, previously unaware of the West Point's Soldier Admission Program, decided to seize the opportunity and applied for acceptance.

"He took the ball and ran with it," said McCoy. "After those initial two meetings, he did everything on his own. He's a highly motivated young man and he went through the entire process on his own as far as gathering what he needed to apply, all while deployed."

Applying for the USMA entails providing the same documentation that civilian higher education institutions require – including transcripts and test scores – with a major additional requirement: a congressional letter of nomination.

"A lot of the difficulty someone going directly from high school trying to get in is getting that congressional nomination," said McCoy.

For prior service applicants from the Army Reserves, National Guard or active duty, that requirement is a bit different.

"One of the benefits that a Soldier has," said Michael Bedryk, USMA National Guard Admissions liaison, "is that in addition to being eligible for a congressional nomination, like any other applicant, they also can be nominated by their command."

For Ochsner, that endorsement came from Capt. Kyle Bell, former Battery C, 1-161 FA commander.

"He was already an outstanding candidate with a high ACT score and a strong desire to grow and learn," said Bell. "He stood out as a junior enlisted member of the battery by quickly learning and assisting his noncommissioned officers to achieve organizational objectives."

For most applicants however, gaining



Aron Ochsner of Wichita, Kansas, graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army on May 1, 2016. Ochsner was a Soldier in the Kansas Army National Guard prior to attending West Point. *Courtesy photo*

admission into West Point is anything but easy. Per the U.S. News and World Report, only 9.5 percent of applicants were accepted in 2014. According to Bedryk, of the approximate 1,200 cadets admitted every year, there are 85 slots reserved specifically for reserve-component prior service applicants, which includes the Army Reserves, National Guard and USMA Preparatory School cadets.

“We want Soldiers to apply,” said Bedryk. “We want them to have this information. If someone actually goes through the process – they can certainly be disqualified for a number of reasons including academics, medical, failing the fitness assessment, etc. – and they are qualified, they stand a really good shot at either a prep school offer or an offer to the academy.”

Bedryk said that the USMA has three major acceptance factors: academics, fitness and leadership potential, and a great measure of leadership potential can be

gleaned by service as an enlisted servicemember. According to USMA.edu, Soldiers are automatically considered for admission to the USMA Preparatory School, for later consideration for admission to West Point.

“A Soldier has some things that a civilian applicant simply won’t have,” said Bedryk. “They might have awards like an Army Achievement Medal or Army Commendation Medal. They might have platoon or squad leader experience. Other things that stand out is whether they’re an honor graduate from Basic, AIT or leadership schools like Warrior Leader Course.”

Ochsner weighed the decision to attend the USMA until he was actually accepted.

“I wavered for a while,” he said, “even as I was going through the application process. After high school, my thought process at Basic and AIT

was to get through it and go back home and start college and be there for four years and get my degree.

USMA cadets go through the “47-Month Experience” which includes academic curriculum and military training. West Point is considered a liberal arts college and Ochsner said that the schooling is academic-focused, with military training mainly reserved for the summertime.

“The coursework during the academic year is very comparable to any public or private school,” he said. “Everything from chemistry to physics to calculus to English plus all your major classes. Here, there is a wider base in required general classes. You don’t get any of your major classes until your junior year.”

The USMA is ranked 22nd in national liberal arts colleges per the U.S. News and World Report and is a taxpayer-funded institution, so cadet tuition is \$0. According to USMA.edu, first-year cadets earn \$900 per month for personal expenses

and cadet expenses including uniforms, books, a computer and activity fees. That amount increases with each year of tenure.

Graduates will commission into one of 16 Army branches and will earn a starting salary of approximately \$44,000 per year as active-duty second lieutenants, with a requirement to serve a minimum of five years. Benefits include military health insurance.

For graduates, opportunities for career progression are immense. Ochsner received his branch assignment as a field artillery officer and will attend the U.S. Army Basic Officer Leader Course prior to going to his first duty station at Schofield Barracks, Honolulu, Hawaii, home of the 25th Infantry Division.

Ochsner asserted that attending the USMA has changed his life.

“I’ve met some of the greatest people in my life here, friends for life,” he said. “I was able to go to Airborne school. I shadowed a platoon leader at the Joint Readiness Training Center. I’ve had so many unique opportunities here that I would not have had otherwise.”

Bell said that it isn’t just the Soldier who benefits from the USMA experience.

“I strongly believe that the Army National Guard should continue to make these long term investments in junior enlisted Soldiers,” said Bell. “Commanders at all levels should encourage opportunities like the one Aron was fortunate enough to pursue. He will either return to the Guard at some point in his career or continue an active-duty career with a full understanding and appreciation of the junior enlisted (Soldier’s) skills, attributes, professionalism and capabilities.”

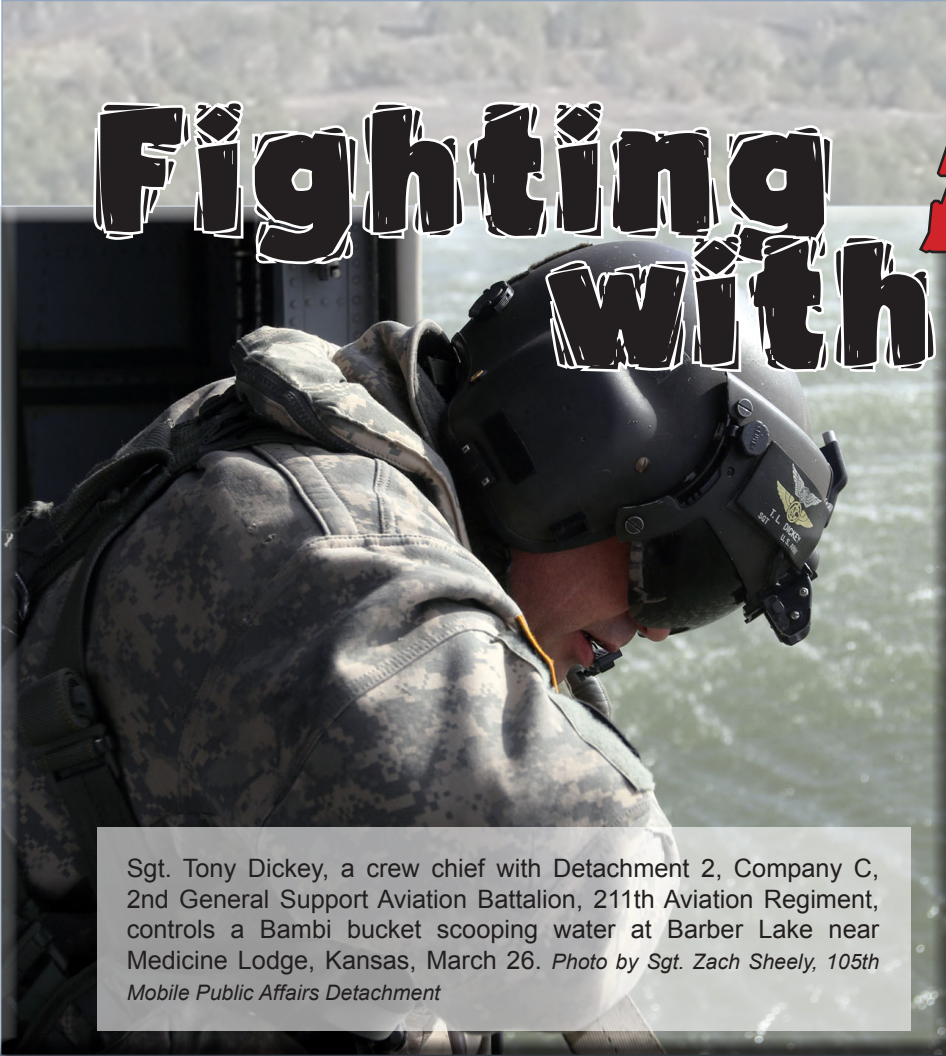
“My time as an enlisted Soldier will and has proven invaluable in my development,” said Ochsner. “It will help me stay grounded and humble as I will move forward in my career and will be a resource I can draw on time and time again.”

Ochsner sees a return to the National Guard as a possibility in his future.

“Returning to the Kansas Guard is something that I’ve always kept in the back of my mind,” he said. “If I want to leave active duty and get into something in the civilian world, I love the military culture and lifestyle, so the Guard is definitely something I would consider returning to in order to continue serving.”



Fighting *fire* with flight



Sgt. Tony Dickey, a crew chief with Detachment 2, Company C, 2nd General Support Aviation Battalion, 211th Aviation Regiment, controls a Bambi bucket scooping water at Barber Lake near Medicine Lodge, Kansas, March 26. Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

By Sgt. Zach Sheely
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment


The Kansas National Guard, along with scores of career and volunteer firefighters, fought the Anderson Creek fire with four UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters. With the added help of an advantageous snowstorm that dropped nearly three inches of snow on the burn zone the morning of March 27, the fire was fully contained.

The blaze scorched approximately 400,000 acres of rural Oklahoma and Kansas land, with approximately 273,000 acres affected in Barber County located in south central Kansas, making it the largest wildfire in Kansas history, according to the Kansas Forest Service.

"We were fortunate enough to have the National Guard aircraft mobilize to help out here on the Anderson Creek fire - Kansas side," said Mark Masters, fire operations director, Kansas Forest Service Incident Management Team.

The rugged terrain made it difficult for ground-based fire crews to access all of the areas affected, and that's why the Kansas National Guard aviation assets were needed.

"This terrain is pretty challenging," said Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback. "Much of Kansas is



flat, but here you've got canyons and a lot of our fire trucks can't get into these areas. The troops have done this in other states so they get to use that experience here in Kansas."

Four Black Hawk helicopters were deployed March 26 with approximately 20 Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment; Company C, 1st Battalion, 211th General Support Aviation Battalion; and Company G, 1st Battalion, 235th GSAB, to assist with aerial fire suppression and reconnaissance. The morning of their arrival the fire was approximately 15 percent contained, according to Gaten Wood, agency administrator for Barber County.

"The ground crews are stating that we knocked the teeth in on this fire and beat it down pretty good," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Steve Hood, KSARNG, who served as the flight control manager. "The civilian agencies in this part of the country do not have any aviation assets, so it's all ground."

"When you get fires this big all the ground guys can do it is try to contain it. With the aircraft and the Bambi bucket, we can really put a lot of water where these guys can't get to. So we can do a lot of cooling of the fire, so the ground crews can get in and knock it down."

The Guard dumped an estimated 124 buckets of water on the hot spots and areas in need, as directed by the incident management. Col. Dave Leger, state Army aviation officer, KSARNG, estimated an approximate 68,000 gallons of water were dumped March 26-27. As of the evening of March 27, the fire containment was estimated to be

above 80 percent by incident officials.

Each Black Hawk, which is manned by a four-person crew, scooped water into the Bambi buckets from local water sources to dump on the flames and hot spots. In addition to the aircraft, the 108th sent a fuel tanker truck and another ground support vehicle with two crewmembers each.

All of the crews fighting the fire received a much-needed break from the windy and dry weather as south central Kansas, including much of the burn area, received an accumulation of up to three inches of overnight snow March 26.

"The timing of the weather was super helpful," said Masters. "We got more moisture than we expected and the timing of getting the National Guard aircraft here and dropping water was helpful. I'm hopeful to be able to put this thing to bed and try to get the local community back to some sense of normalcy."

According to Masters, the teamwork between the fire crews, incident management team and Guard Soldiers came naturally.

"We were working seamlessly as one air team," said Masters. "That cohesion and teamwork was instant as soon as the aircraft landed."

"The integration between us and the guys on the ground has been phenomenal," said Maj. Kevin Kennedy, 1-108th operations officer Black Hawk pilot. "They've been able to zero us in on

some of the spots that are inaccessible as well as some of the areas where the fire is just so big it makes more sense to attack it from above."

Many of the Kansas aviation Soldiers have assisted with wildfire suppression in other states, but for most, this was their first fire control mission in Kansas.

"As Guardsmen," Kennedy said. "This is one of the reasons that we joined. We joined so that we could help our brothers and sisters in the event that something happened. The ability to take our training and use that training to help our neighbors is why we got into this business to begin with."

Kennedy was quick to credit the ground crews for a majority of the containment.

"Even though our contributions are probably the most visible," said Kennedy, "the people who are making the most difference are the firefighters that are on the ground."

The Guard Soldiers departed Medicine Lodge March 27 to return to their respective home stations in Salina and Topeka.

"Our highest gratitude goes out to the Kansas National Guard for their expertise and professionalism," said Gaten Wood, Barber County attorney, who served as agency administrator for the incident management team. "We couldn't have done it without them."



Four UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters piloted and crewed by Soldiers with 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment (two from Army Aviation Support Facility #2, Salina, Kansas and two from Army Aviation Support Facility #1, Topeka) joined the Anderson Creek wildfire fight March 26. The helicopters arrived in Medicine Lodge, Kansas, March 26, and dropped water from Bambi Buckets™ on active flames and hot spots as directed by incident officials. The fire in south central Kansas burned more than 400,000 acres.

Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Signal acquired: Kansas Army National Guard activates 330th Brigade Signal Company

By Sgt. Zach Sheely
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

“We are in the future.”

The future is now according to 1st Sgt. James Peeler, first sergeant with the newly-activated 330th Brigade Signal Company of the Kansas Army National Guard.

“It’s something out of Star Trek,” said Peeler. “That’s where we’re at right now.”

The 330th BSC was officially activated during a ceremony at the Heartland Preparedness Center in Wichita, Kansas, Dec. 5. It will operate as part of the 997th Brigade Support Battalion and serve primarily as the signal arm of the 130th Field Artillery Brigade, KSARNG.

The signal corps mission is to develop, test, provide and manage communications and information systems support for the command and control of combined arms forces. According to 330th commander Capt. Louis Latimer, it’s an important and uncommon charge.

“It’s a significant impact for the state and the signal community in general as this is the second signal company that Kansas has stood up; the first one was the 369th Brigade Signal Company,” said Latimer. “(The 330th) is one of ten units like this (Department of Defense) wide.

“We will directly support the brigade,” he said. “Our mission could be summarized really as an internet service provider. We are like Cox or AT&T coming to your house with our wire saying, ‘Here you go, here’s the internet.’”

That’s no small task, considering a majority of Army operations involve some facet of network communications. Peeler, a 33-year veteran of the signal corps, said it’s an ever-evolving, vital component of military practices.

“Signal has evolved immensely,” said Peeler. “It’s grown leaps and bounds. It’s not stopping, it keeps growing and technology keeps getting better. We’re performing a mission that’s very critical.”

Latimer, a six-year signal officer, said



Capt. Louis Latimer, 330th Brigade Signal Company commander, returns the salute of his formation at the conclusion of a ceremony officially activating the 330th BSC at the Heartland Preparedness Center, Wichita, Kansas, Dec. 5. Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

that among his immediate goals is to fill the manning requirements for the unit by adding qualified and motivated Soldiers from within the brigade and statewide.

“They’re on it,” Peeler said about his younger Soldiers. “They’re quick learners. It’s their generation. My generation, we had balls on the end of a rubber band. These guys are starting off basically from the crib with technology. Their potential is there.”

Peeler also noted that there are a lot of civilian tie-ins with a career in signal, including the equipment used and certifications required.

“They have such an opportunity to

expand their knowledge base through courses the Army offers,” he said. “The certificates that are out there in the civilian world, they can cost you a lot of money. All the stuff you need on the civilian side, you can pick up through the Army and save a lot of money.”

Just as the crew of the Starship Enterprise boldly went where no one had gone before. The Guardsmen of the 330th hope to lead the way as they fulfill their mission.

“This is really bringing Kansas onto a new playing field and opening up the door to the signal community in general,” Latimer said.

Smith is new state command chief warrant officer of the Kansas Army National Guard

By Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Barnett
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The warrant officer cohort of the Kansas Army National Guard welcomed a new leader Oct. 16, 2015, as Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael W. Smith took responsibility as the state command chief warrant officer in a change of authority ceremony at Nickell Armory, Topeka.

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Hector A. Vasquez passed the Warrant Officer Corps guidon, signifying authority of the Kansas Army National Guard warrant officers, to Brig. Gen. Robert E. Windham, commander of the Kansas Army National Guard, who passed the guidon to Smith, investing in him responsibility as the command chief warrant officer of the Joint Forces Headquarters Kansas-Land Component, Kansas Army National Guard.

Vasquez will continue his military career on a Title 10 tour as the National Guard Field Artillery advisory for the Professional Education Center at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

“(Chief Warrant Officer 4) Smith has had success wherever he goes,” said Windham. “I am excited what lies ahead for our Warrant Officer Corps. I know he will sustain our momentum and show a whole new generation of men and women the path to success and service.”

In his new position, Smith will manage the warrant officer force and represent their interests at all levels of local and state government and to the public. He will be the personal advisor to the Kansas adjutant general on issues regarding the professional development, readiness, training, utilization, health, morale and welfare of the nearly 130 warrant officers of the Kansas Army National Guard.

“I am honored to be here,” said Smith. “If there is a position in the Kansas Army National Guard as a warrant to aspire to, it’s the command chief warrant officer.

“If someone was to tell me 20, 25



Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael W. Smith accepts the Kansas Army National Guard Warrant Officer Corps guidon from Brig. Gen. Robert E. Windham, commander of the KSARNG, in a change of authority ceremony held at the Nickell Armory in Topeka Oct 16. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Barnett, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

years ago that I would be the command chief warrant officer for the state of Kansas, I would have told them they were crazy, but there is no other place I would be right now.”

The custom of a change of authority ceremony is a time-honored tradition that extends back to the time of the Roman legions. The ceremony calls attention

to the continuing leadership and cohort identity, despite changes in individual authority and symbolizes the transfer of command responsibility from one individual to another. This transfer is formally represented by passing the colors from the outgoing command chief to the next senior commander to the new command chief.



Warrant Officer Laurin Stout presents a dozen yellow rosebuds to the wife of Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael W. Smith's to welcome her to the command during change of authority ceremony held at the Nickell Armory in Topeka, Kansas, Oct 16, 2015. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Barnett, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Kansas state Chaplain passes responsibility to new leadership

By Sgt. Brandon Jacobs
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

In a rare ceremony known as a Changing of the Stole, retired Chaplain (Col.) William D. Jenkins handed command of the state chaplains over to Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Peter M. Jaramillo Nov. 7, 2015, at the Museum of the Kansas National Guard, Topeka, Kansas.

"Today is the end of my military career and the transfer of responsibility with the changing of the stole," said Jenkins.

Jenkins joined the Army with a direct commission as a chaplain in 1989 and has served the religious needs of several units, culminating with his three-year command of all the National Guard chaplains in the state.

"Chaplain Jenkins has done an outstanding job for the last three years as the state chaplain," said Maj. Gen. Lee Tafari, adjutant general of Kansas National. "He's grown the chaplain corps that we have, that outstanding team, from a little over 50 percent to 80 percent."


Jenkins retired with 26 years of honorable service to the Kansas National Guard and will continue his religious mission as the bereavement coordinator for Grace Hospice and the priest in charge of the Episcopal Church of the Covenant in Junction City.

Jaramillo, or Father Pete as he is affectionately known, has served the religious needs of the Kansas Guard for 19 years. He comes to the state chaplaincy from the 35th Infantry Division, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

"Chaplain Peter Jaramillo is a dear friend, brother in Christ and an awesome chaplain," said Jenkins.

During his time in the guard, Jaramillo has deployed to serve the religious needs of service members in Kosovo, Germany and Iraq.

"He always finds time to serve the needs of the Kansas Army National Guard," said Tafari. "We really look forward to his leadership in the future."

A photograph of Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Peter Jaramillo, a man with glasses and a mustache, wearing a dark military uniform with a white stole. He is standing behind a wooden podium with a microphone, smiling. Behind him is a large framed painting of a battle scene. The text is overlaid on the bottom left of the photo.

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Peter Jaramillo, incoming state chaplain, addresses his new flock for the first time during a ceremony held at the Museum of the Kansas National Guard in Topeka, Kansas, Nov 7, 2015.

Photo by Sgt. Brandon Jacobs, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Kuntz retires after 39-year Army career

By Zach Sheely

105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Col. Gordon D. Kuntz has had a home in the military for more than 39 years in a career spanning five decades. He served in the active Army and Army National Guard and held numerous duty positions, including his most recent, commander of the Kansas Medical Detachment and state surgeon.

Kuntz's long career and many achievements were celebrated by colleagues, family, friends and the Soldiers under his command during two separate ceremonies Nov. 8.

During the first ceremony, held at Nickell Armory, Topeka, Kuntz was presented the Legion of Merit – an award given for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services and achievements – by Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general of Kansas.

“(Kuntz) has been a tremendous asset to his state and country and we’re better from having him,” said Tafanelli. “When he took command of the Medical Detachment, they were ranked among the bottom third in the country. He leaves it ranked within the top five.”

Kuntz, who enlisted in the United States Army in 1975, briefly addressed his colleagues, thanking them for their support during his career and recognized his family's support.

During the second ceremony at the Great Plains Joint Training Center in Salina, Kansas, Kuntz was presented with gifts from colleagues and honored by the Soldiers of the Medical Detachment.

“Without reservation, I can say my tour of duty has been incredible, providing me with countless opportunities and experiences I would not have had outside the military,” said Kuntz. “Looking back over the past 39 plus years, I have truly been blessed to have the unwavering



Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general of Kansas, left, presents Col. Gordon D. Kuntz the Legion of Merit award during a ceremony at Nickell Armory in Topeka on Nov. 8, 2015, honoring Kuntz's nearly 40 years of service to the military. *Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

support of my family and to serve with so many outstanding officers and soldiers in the Kansas Army National Guard. While I will miss so many of my colleagues, I look forward to the journey that lies ahead.”

Colonel Gordon D. Kuntz

Kuntz entered the United States Army March 10, 1975, completing Basic Combat Training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. He attended Common Basic Electronics Training for Tactical Microwave Repair at Fort Gordon, Georgia, and was stationed at Fort Jackson as a COBET instructor. Kuntz re-enlisted as a patient care specialist in 1978 and was assigned to the pediatrics unit at Madigan Army Medical Center Fort Lewis, Washington. One year later, he completed the patient care specialist course and was assigned to Company B, 1st Medical Battalion, Fort Riley, Kansas, until leaving active duty Feb. 29, 1984, with nine years of active duty.

After one year, he joined the Kansas Army National Guard and was assigned as the medical noncommissioned officer at the Kansas Military Academy in Salina, Kansas, where he entered Class 30 of the Kansas Officer Candidate School. Upon graduation, Kuntz remained as the medical noncommissioned officer while he completed his nursing education. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the infantry and assigned as a junior


tactical officer at the KMA until the time of his direct commission in the Nurse Corps in January 1988, where he served as the nurse/medical officer at the KMA. Other duty assignments included clinical nurse, nurse practitioner, training officer and head nurse for Physical Examination Team B with Detachment 5, Headquarters State Area Command, Lenexa.

Kuntz served as the executive officer and deputy commander for the Kansas Medical Detachment prior to attending the United States Army War College in July 2006. Upon completion of the War College, he was assigned as the Medical Detachment commander until his deployment to the Horn of Africa in June 2010 as the senior medical nurse with the 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment.

His education includes a bachelor's degree in nursing from Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas, and a Master of Science degree in nursing from Wichita State University. He is a life member of the National Guard Association of Kansas, a lifetime member of the Disabled American Veterans and a member of the Kansas State Nurses Association.

Kuntz is a graduate of the United States Army War College, Advance Joint Professional Military Education Program and the Medical Strategic Leadership Program. Kuntz is a semiretired psychiatric nurse practitioner.





Changing the culture of the Kansas National Guard one repetition at a time

*By Sgt. Zach Sheely
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

“Everything you’re going to do in a uniform is going to come back to that (Army Physical Fitness Test), your height/weight, and if you can meet those standards.”

Sgt. 1st Class Charles “Chip” Cunningham’s opening message to the Kansas Army National Guard Soldiers attending the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Course, hosted by the 235th Regiment at the Kansas Regional Training Institute in Salina, Kansas, hangs in the air like an anvil.

It’s not the first time these Soldiers have heard this, but they’re here – most of them on a volunteer basis – to learn the skills to avoid ever hearing it again.

At its core, the course is intended to help Soldiers improve their APFT results and body composition. During the two-week course, in which Soldiers are away from their homes and families, they’re given fundamental tools to help them meet Army standards.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kimberly Fox



THE PROBLEM

The problem, according to Cunningham, is that after basic combat training and advanced individual training, Soldiers aren't given the education or training required to lead a healthy and military-ready lifestyle.

"We're losing a large number of Soldiers due to APFT and height/weight issues and it's affecting our retention," said Cunningham, who serves as the lead instructor of the course.

Col. Michael Erwin, special assistant to the adjutant general, Kansas National Guard, said that in the 2015 training year alone, there were approximately 156 Soldiers up for reenlistment who could not pass the APFT or height/weight. In most cases, Soldiers who cannot meet the standards are barred from reenlisting.

"Taxpayers of this country spend a lot of money on each individual Soldier," said Erwin, "and if we lose a Soldier because they can't meet the standard, we're wasting the taxpayers' money."

The issue has been shaped by the culture and operation climate of the last decade, Cunningham said.

"Due to (high-operations tempo), we were focused on numbers, numbers, numbers," he said. "For a long time, some of the things like APFT and height/weight kind of got pushed to the side."

"Now we're in the opposite



Top: Sgt. 1st Class Charles Cunningham addresses a formation of Soldiers prior to the initial APFT, Jan. 18, in Salina, Kansas. Left: Soldiers complete the two-mile run as part of the second APFT, Jan. 30. Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Kimberly Fox, Detachment 2, Company C, 2nd General Support Aviation Battalion, 211th Aviation Regiment

situation. We're not worried about (overseas deployments) as much. We're seeing a (reduction) of the force and one of the first places units are going to look to is Soldiers outside of the standards."

"I think the problem is so large, it's like our house is on fire and we're outside mowing the lawn," said Staff Sgt. Randall Milleson, a participant in the course. "You can't just tell a Soldier 'Oh, keep running and next month we'll test you again and see if you pass.' We need to attack the problem."

THE SOLDIERS

The Soldiers who participated in the course came from across Kansas. They ranged from 21-53 years old and included men and women representing a wide spectrum of military occupational specialties. Yet, whether they grappled with meeting the height and weight standard or passing the PT test – or both – they shared a similar struggle.

Staff Sgt. Danny Mersch cited time management as a major hur-



dle for him.

"I work 10-12 hour days," he said. "So where do you add time for activity?"

Cunningham, who has been featured on the cover of body building books, is quick to tell students of his own struggles with weight, nutrition and fitness in the past and how he wasn't always aware of how bad his habits had become – or worse, how to change them.

"We get in great shape during basic and advanced individual training," Cunningham asserted. "All these Soldiers here have passed the APFT at some point. However, when we're attending that training, we do push-ups and sit-ups and run a lot; that's not really that fun and it can be really hard to motivate yourself to do that on your own."

"Soldiers know they need to work out and everyone knows they

need to eat better," he said, "but a lot of times that's not enough. We need to identify the motivating factors that will develop good habits and then keep them sustainable for the long term."

THE PHYSICAL TRAINING

The Kansas National Guard Comprehensive Soldier Fitness course was the initiative of Brig. Gen. Robert E. Windham, commander of the Kansas Army National Guard and developed by Col. Tony Divish, director of logistics, and Erwin.

Soldiers were administered an APFT on day two to gauge their initial level of fitness. The APFT is designed to test the muscular strength, endurance and cardiovascular respiratory fitness of Soldiers in the Army. Soldiers are scored based on their performance in three timed events: the push-up, the sit-up and a two-mile run, ranging

from 0 to 100 points in each event.

In the two weeks that followed, the Soldiers in the course spent three hours per day in the gym.

There, they focused on three areas: strength training; "tactical" training, including kick boxing, boxing, kettle bell swinging, Cross-Fit and body-weight resistance elements; and Army Physical Readiness Training.

"Part of the curriculum is teaching our students physical readiness training and how to lead the formation," said Erwin. "They don't just stand in formation and let our instructors lead it. They actually have to go up and lead that training. So when the student goes back to their unit, they have a qualified person that can actually lead that training."

"This gives Soldiers a chance to work out and take it out to their units," Cunningham said. "Then they're the subject matter experts. They can start teaching PRT. That does two things: it brings PRT out to those units, but it also gives Sol



Soldiers utilize the weight room at the Student Life Center of the Kansas State Polytechnic campus in Salina as part of their strength training. Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



diers self-confidence.

"When they get back to their units, they're going to show what they learned here. Then they're proving to themselves what they can really do."

THE INSTRUCTION

However, it's about much more than just physical fitness.

"When we say 'comprehensive' we mean that word literally," said Cunningham. "It's not just physical fitness. We're focusing on everything from mental strength, nutrition, resilience, goal setting and finances. All that stuff is tied together. When you think about fitness, it's more than how you can perform in a gym."

Milleson, a human resources noncommissioned officer, 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery, said that his biggest challenge is finding

a sustainable way to eat "healthy."

"My nutrition is all over the place," he said. "I do a lot of yo-yo dieting. I'll try anything just to make height/weight, but it's never consistent and it isn't the right way to do it."

Students are given classroom instruction on a variety of nutrition topics, including macro nutrients, what to eat when eating out, meal prepping and foods to avoid.

"We molded it on basic nutrition," said Erwin. "What does a carb mean? What does a protein mean? In the program curriculum, we don't talk about counting calories. We talk about looking at the food and seeing how much you're eating to assess what you really need."

"The nutrition classes are teaching me what I should be eating," said Spc. Rex Bontrager, cannon crewmember, 1-161 FA. "How I should be eating and



when I should be eating versus my current habit of grabbing whatever looks good and is easy."

The instruction doesn't stop in the classroom.

"They make a grocery list based off recommended foods that we provide. That way they can make foods they actually see themselves eating," said Cunningham. "Then we go to the grocery store so we can see the food and also start to get an idea of how much is this stuff going to cost? That's another obstacle of fitness. Eating better can be more expensive. Then the finance comes into it and that's another area we focus on."

Soldiers are given financial training by a financial advisor, and then each made a budget based on their own finances.

They also cooked two meals at the 235th Regiment culinary school kitchen using basic recipes



Soldiers shop for recommended foods to familiarize themselves with what foods they should be shopping for and eating. *Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

Spc. Maria Handy pushes herself for one more repetition during the second APFT Jan. 30. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kimberly Fox, Detachment 2, Company C, 2nd General Support Aviation Battalion, 211th Aviation Regiment



with healthy ingredients.

“FAT CAMP”

Cunningham has heard the term “fat camp” attached to the course.

“Every person that calls it ‘fat camp’ or has something negative to say about this program, you know why they’re saying that?” Cunningham asked. “Because they’re probably the people that need to be in this program and it scares them. It scares them to see these Soldiers going through and actually making progress because, honestly, they don’t have the strength to do it themselves.

“That negativity has no place. People need to support these Soldiers. We have to. We should never put someone down for going out and wanting to make a change. That’s how we get here in the first

place.

“It goes back to culture,” he continued. “How does this happen?”

“I’ve heard it, too, ‘fat camp,’” said Milleson. “And I’ve said it before, too. It brings a negative connotation to it. Until I was going to the course and I heard it, I didn’t realize the negativity that goes with it. Anybody can come to this course and you will learn something.”

Cunningham said it motivates him and the Soldiers in the course. Students from the first course named their classroom accountability group “Phat Camp” to turn the negative into a positive.

THE RESULTS

Collectively, the 31 Soldiers who participated in the course lost 136.5 pounds and averaged a three percent decrease in body fat over the two-week span of the program.

The Soldiers increased their cu-

mulative APFT scores by an average of 40 points per person, including a 110-minute total reduction in the two-mile run from the initial test to the second test given on day 13.

Cunningham credited the team of instructors and subject matter experts who loaned their expertise throughout, and the Soldiers themselves.

“I didn’t even know what I had in me,” said Spc. John Meyer, light wheel mechanic, 250th Forward Support Company. “I’m 43 years old now. Looking at my lifestyle before, I was totally screwed up. I was not even close to doing what I should be doing. I’m really glad that I had the opportunity to participate in this program and reevaluate myself.”

“This course gives you that life rope,” said Mersch, information technology specialist, 235th Regiment, “like what they do for suicide prevention. To me, this is kind of like that severity of a situation. In reality, if you’re not physically fit



Sgt. 1st Class Charles Cunningham leads a nutrition class at the 235th Regiment in Salina, Kansas, Jan. 20. Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

and staying in shape in the military, you are committing career suicide.”

Not all the Soldiers were long-time veterans. Spc. Maria Handy, medic with the 1077th Ground Ambulance Company, has served in the Kansas Guard for just over six years and is seeking promotion to the rank of sergeant.

“Now my friends are asking me all this advice about eating,” said Handy. “It feels really good to know what I’m actually talking about. I have firsthand experience on what to do and how to implement it. This is a great program. Anybody who’s afraid to try it, try it.”

Milleson served in the Marine Corps before his time in the Kansas Guard and said that he hasn’t participated in a course or program throughout his military career that has affected his life as much.

“This is the most important course that’s been offered in the National Guard,” he said. “I’ve been

to several schools and nothing impacts the readiness, morale and resilience of Soldiers as this course.”

THE FUTURE

The Soldiers will return to Salina in April 2016 to take a follow-up APFT and height/weight screening to track their progress, but according to Cunningham, it’s about much more than numbers on a piece of paper.

“We’re not really interested in where the Soldiers are at the completion of this course,” said Cunningham. “Our focus is where they’re going to be six months from now, a year from now. Can they be consistent? That’s what we try to develop, the skills, habits and education they need to develop their own action plan.”

Soldiers gathered what they learned and drafted their own

individual action plans, including short- and long-term goals and how they intend to achieve them. They presented their plan to their peers, another accountability step in the changing of the culture, according to Cunningham.

One of Cunningham’s goals for the course includes inviting former students to come back and lead training in future courses, but his main objective is simple.

“I don’t want this to be an issue anymore,” he emphasized. “My goal is that we have higher APFT results across the board. We have to start to get this information out to the units and we make this more of a priority.”

“I want to continue this program, but my overall goal is that we don’t need this program,” he said.

The next Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Course is tentatively scheduled for late summer, 2016. Contact your chain of command if you are interested in participating.



Collectively, the 31 Soldiers who participated in the course lost 136.5 pounds and averaged a three percent decrease in body fat. The Soldiers increased their cumulative APFT scores by an average of 40 points per person from the initial test to the second test given on day 13. *Courtesy Photo*



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1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery trains for civil disturbance

By Spc. Mikayla Gentine
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Soldiers of the 1-161 Field Artillery played the role of civil disturbance first responders on October 24-25, 2015, at the Great Plains Regional Training Center in Salina, Kansas.

This training mirrored a block of instruction with the 35th Military Police in Topeka, Kan. earlier in the month. Over the course of the two-day event, Soldiers learned techniques in escalation of force, personal protection, nonlethal self-defense, and riot shield formations.


While learning these techniques Soldiers develop a broader sense of their part in a civil disturbance scenario, as well as how it affects the overall mission of the Kansas Guard, if ever called to conduct riot control missions.

“The training teaches Soldiers the difference between a de-escalation event and possibly crippling relations with the public,” said 1st Sgt. Michael Barber, senior instructor.

A de-escalation event describes the process used by Soldiers in a riot control scenario to diffuse rising tensions before resorting to physical detainment. For instance, a rioter choosing not to leave an area and instead push against shielded Soldiers would first be faced with verbal warnings before apprehension.

“This training gives the Soldiers confidence in knowing when they show up to a situation how they should act or react,” said Barber, “not just in regard to a bad person who’s doing a bad thing, but just normal people.”

Barber said his group is constantly seeking and training instructors, to ensure as many units as possible in the state are trained in case of a civil disturbance emergency. Optimally, explained Barber, trainers would be embedded within battalions to provide training to Soldiers that may find themselves supported by the 35th Military Police Company. Anyone interested in becoming an instructor would first have to attend training events by state instructors and show a continual interest and dedication to maintaining peace in the state of Kansas.



Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery train to handle violent rioters as safely as possible during an exercise held at the Great Plains Joint Training Center in Salina Oct. 24-25, 2015. Teams spread along a riot control line subdued volunteer rioters who made violent outburst against Soldiers holding riot shields Photo by Spc. Mikayla Gentine, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery meet the sunrise in a formation spread across a field at the Great Plains Regional Training Center in Salina, Kansas, for civil disturbance training Oct. 24, 2015. *Photo by Spc.Mikayla Gentine, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

Simulated gas cloaks Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery as they take a stance against volunteer rioters as part of civil disturbance training at the Great Plains Joint Training Center in Salina, Kansas, Oct. 24, 2015. *Photo by Spc.Mikayla Gentine, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

Kansas, Missouri National Guard conduct joint contracting training



Members of the Kansas Army National Guard's 1979th Contracting Team and the Missouri Air National Guard's 139th Mission Support Group - Contracting Team, pose for a photo on May 20, after a Kansas plaque was presented to the 139th for hosting the joint training exercise at the 139th Air Wing in St. Joseph, Missouri, May 15-20. *Photo by Tech Sgt. Michael Crane, 139th Mission Support Group*

By Capt. John Hutson
1979th Contracting Team

The Kansas Army National Guard's 1979th Contracting Team conducted a joint training exercise with the Missouri Air National Guard, 139th Mission Support Group - Contracting Team, from May 15-20 in St. Joseph, Missouri.

The purpose of the exercise was to afford acquisition readiness training to members of the respective teams in a joint branch setting. Combined, there were a total of five KSARNG and four MOANG team members present for the exercise.

The teams simulated a Joint Regional Contracting Office (RCO) to support National Guard and Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) during a flood disaster scenario. The RCO responded to requirements for disaster response items such as sandbags, barricades and waste-removal services, which would be required by supported units in the scenario.

Contract specialists within the RCO conducted market research, communicated with the customers and created solicitations and contracts for required supplies and services while attaining the best value for the government.

Maj. Robert Parvin, team leader of the 1979th Contracting Team, acted as RCO chief, and Master Sgt. Cami Glasgow of the 139th Mission Support Group, acted as deputy RCO chief. Together they reviewed and approved the contract documentation and acted as warranted contracting officers who sign the contracts and command a joint office.

Sgt. 1st Class Scott Dandy, training non-commissioned officer with the 1979th, developed the exercise. He designed it to develop the team's contingency and emergency response contracting skills. Realistic events such as visits by VIPs and power interruptions were incorporated into the exercise to train the team in adapting to conditions in a wide variety of

contingencies. Dandy also administered contracting warrant exams to the RCO chief and deputy chief to test their knowledge of federal and DoD acquisition regulations.

Working within a joint team allowed each member to gain valuable knowledge of the processes and procedures that are needed to work in support of DSCA missions. Acquisition readiness poses a challenge to the National Guard, as the teams are comprised of traditional M-Day members and full-time technician members.

This exercise provided reality based scenarios within a prolonged duration not available during a standard IDT training weekend. The final assessment revealed to all team members the multitude of challenges that may be encountered in supporting emergency acquisitions in a DSCA environment. These lessons learned will better help the 1979th Contracting Team to effectively respond to this type of real world event in the future.



KANSAS NATIONAL GUARD

CURRENT AS OF 11/24/2015

Resources for Service Members & Families in need or in crisis.



SUICIDE HOTLINE — 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

MOBILE APP IOS/ANDROID: GUARD READY

CHAPLAIN

Providing religious, spiritual and general life counseling.
100% confidential.

JFHQ

Office: (785) 274-1514

CH (MAJ) John Potter

Cell: (785) 220-9480 john.p.potter.mil@mail.mil

SFC Jimmy Boss

Cell: (785) 215-4067 jimmy.d.boss.mil@mail.mil

190th ARW Chaplain

CH (Lt Col) Kevin Hopkins

Office: (785) 861-4001 Cell: (620) 218-2899

kevin.w.hopkins2.mil@mail.mil

184th IW Chaplain

CH (LtCol) Oliver Bergeron

Office: (316) 759-7100 Cell: (316) 210-7956

oliver.j.bergeron.mil@mail.mil

PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH

Provides complimentary, confidential consultations to Service Members and their families. The services covered include but are not limited to: anger management, stress related issues, relationships, finance, children acting out, and problems at school.

Psychological Health Coordinator

Kansas State Director of Psychological Health

John Kriss

Cell: (785) 338-6951 John.p.kriss.ctr@mail.mil

190th ARW Director of Psychological Health

Robert Johnson

Office: (785) 861-4792 Cell: (785) 217-7325

DSN: 720-4792 robert.johnson.8@ang.af.mil

184th IW Director of Psychological Health

Jeri Kennedy

Office: (316) 759-8901 DSN: 743-8901

Cell: (316) 617-6401 jeri.kennedy@ang.af.mil

FAMILY ASSISTANCE OFFICE

Provides information on and referral to essential services, including: Financial Assistance, Legal Referral, Follow-Up and Outreach

Hiawatha: Cherie Herlinger (Coordinator)

(785) 806-1761 cherie.l.herlinger.ctr@mail.mil

Iola: David Fehr

(785) 806-1756 david.a.fehr4.ctr@mail.mil

Wichita: Renee Henry

(785) 806-1754 renee.m.henry6.ctr@mail.mil

Lenexa: Tammy Alsup

(785) 806-9842 tamatha.d.bullardalsup.ctr@mail.mil

Salina: Kara L Marlow

(785) 991-0706 kara.l.marlow.ctr@mail.mil

Hutchinson: Jennifer Villarreal

(785) 991-0712 Jennifer.l.villarreal10.ctr@mail.mil

Lawrence: Hannah Roland

(785) 213-3012 hannah.b.roland.ctr@mail.mil

JFHQ—SARC

Capt. Tim Traynor

Office: (785) 274-1578 timothy.p.traynor2.mil@mail.mil

Cell: (Emergency or to report an assault) 785-438-0017

<https://www.safehelpline.org> 877-995-5247

MSG Lyle Babcock - M-Day

Office: (785) 274-1941 lyle.e.babcock.mil@mail.mil

JFHQ-KS Victim Advocate Coordinator (VAC)

Cell: 785-207-8530

STATE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT MANAGER

2nd Lt. Jody Cope

Office: (785) 274-1166 jody.k.cope.mil@mail.mil

STATE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ADVSOR

SFC Craig Ledet

Office: (785) 274 - 1168 craig.l.ledet.mil@mail.mil

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY DIRECTOR

184th IW: 1st Lt. David Schonberg

Office: (316) 759-7047 / 7048 david.m.schonberg.mil@mail.mil

CHIEF OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

190th ARW: 2nd Lt. Jody Cope

Office: (785) 861-4303 / 4304 jody.k.cope.mil@mail.mil

AIRMAN & FAMILY READINESS PROGRAM MANAGER

184th IW: Hilari Delarosa - Office: (316) 759-7092 Cell: (316) 617-8043

DSN: 743-7092

Hilari.a.delarosa.civ@mail.mil

190th ARW: Adrienne Dickey - Office: (785) 861-4940 Cell: (785) 806-1252

DSN: 720-4940 Adrienne.l.dickey.civ@mail.mil

TRIAL DEFENSE SERVICES (TDS)

Legal service and advice for Service Members.

MAJ Jason Oldham

Office: (785) 274-1027

These resources are for all KSNG Service Members and their families regardless of their duty status.



KANSAS GUARD SOLDIERS WARM UP AT BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION



Sgt. Maura Griffith, transportation specialist, 137th Transportation Company, fires her M4 carbine during the state's Best Warrior Competition, held in Salina, Kansas, March 18-19. *Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

By Sgt. Zach Sheely
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Three Kansas Army National Guard Soldiers stood alone at the top after competing in the KSARNG Best Warrior Competition at the Kansas Regional Training Center in Salina on March 18-19.

The competition tests Soldiers' physical stamina and mental resolve. This year, they had another factor to fight – the elements of a late-winter storm.

The Soldiers battled the rain, snow and cold – and each other – to warm up for the regional Best Warrior Competition.

Battling near blizzard conditions, the Soldiers completed the Army Physical Fitness Test, qualified their M4 carbines on the rifle range. Along the way, they also completed a ruck march, land navigation course and Army Warrior Tasks.

"This day was very physical for them," said Command Sgt. Maj. Brian Anderson, Joint Forces Headquarters – Land Component command sergeant major. "The wind and snow and cold weather was blowing right in their face ... each one of the Soldiers that we had put out 100 percent."

Command Sgt. Maj. Dwane Clifford, 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment command sergeant major, said that the competition is a way to build morale and esprit de corps.

"They train hard and they work hard and this provides them a platform to display their attributes as a Soldier," said Clifford.

Command Sgt. Maj. Harold Whitley, 130th Field Artillery Brigade command sergeant major, said a Soldier must be well rounded to claim the title "Best Warrior." On day two, the Soldiers completed an appearance board before a panel of command sergeants major to test appearance, military bearing and knowledge of Army doctrine.

"You have to be pretty good at everything," said Whitley. "... physically fit. You have to have stamina. You also have to have the ability to recover from something you didn't do so well in.

"If you look at everything that a Soldier has to be proficient in to fight, win and survive in combat, we try to replicate that through the training and the testing process. It's the gamut of what a Soldier is and what they have to do."

The annual KSARNG Best Warrior Competition is open to all Soldiers. This year Sgt. Maura Griffith, transportation specialist, 137th Transportation Company, competed alongside male counterparts.

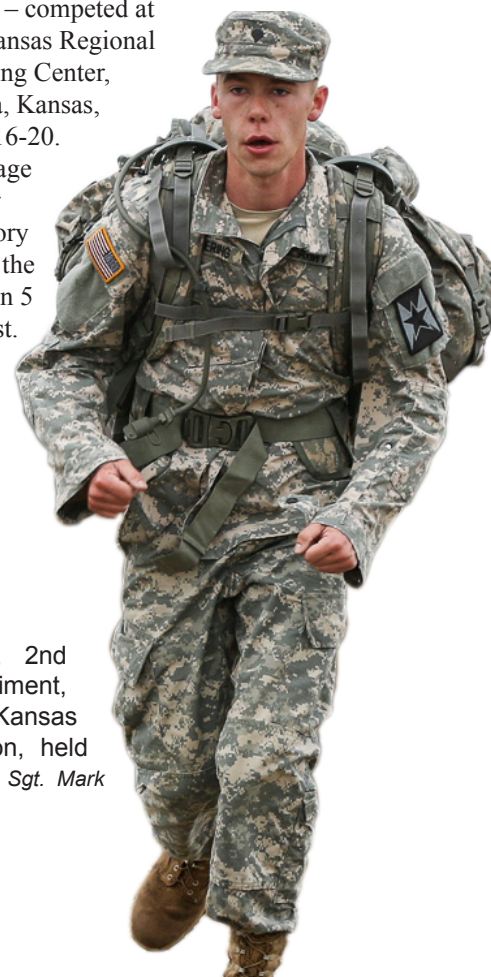
"It gave me a big confidence boost," said Griffith. "I love when people say that females can't do something, because I'm the first one to jump in and show that I can. A lot of it is physical, but a lot of it is

just the mindset. If I can do it, any female can do it. There's no excuses."

Staff Sgt. Shawn Cron, infantryman, 2-137 CAB, won the noncommissioned officer category and Spc. Trenton Goering, small arms repairer, 2-137 CAB, won the Soldier category. Griffith was runner-up in the Soldier category.

Soldiers from Region 5 – which includes Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Texas – competed at the Kansas Regional Training Center, Salina, Kansas, May 16-20.

See page 28 for the story about the Region 5 contest.



Spc. Trenton Goering, small arms repairer, 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment, picks up his pace during the ruck march of the Kansas Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition, held in Salina, Kansas, March 18-19. *Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Nussbaumer, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

Kansas SENTINEL



Looking for stories, photos or video products from around the Kansas Army National Guard?

Kansas Army National Guard Facebook site (stories, photos, video products and more)

<https://www.facebook.com/KSARNG>

For digital flip-magazine issues of the *Kansas Sentinel*

<http://issuu.com/ks105thmpad>

For PDF copies of the *Kansas Sentinel*

<http://www.kansastag.gov/NGUARD.asp?PageID=396>

For the 105th MPAD's DVIDS site (stories, photos, video products)

<http://www.dvidshub.net/unit/105MPAD>

For PDF copies of the *Plains Guardian*

<http://www.kansastag.gov/NGUARD.asp?PageID=7>



Kansas Adjutant General's Department

<http://www.kansastag.gov/>



Looking for a job? Check out these links.

HRO Webpage – all open full-time positions for Army and Air Guard (Technician and AGR)

http://www.kansastag.gov/fedhro_default.asp

USAJOBS - Link (using the key word search of Kansas National Guard)

<https://www.usajobs.gov/>

Army Guard Traditional M-Day vacancies

<http://kansastag.gov/OPP.asp?PageID=557>

Air Guard "Traditional" vacancies

<http://www.kansastag.gov/OPP.asp?PageID=601>

Civilian Jobs for National Guard Members

<http://kansastag.gov/NGUARD.asp?PageID=455>

Kansas Army National Guard <http://www.kansasarmynationalguard.com/>



PICTURES FROM AROUND THE SUNFLOWER STATE



Master Sgt. Roger Brooker, 190th Air Refueling Wing, takes aim at two clay targets during the 2016 Sporting Clays Shoot Out held at Ravenwood Lodge in Topeka, Kansas, April 22. The event is held annually in conjunction with the joint state conference of the National Guard Association of Kansas. *Photo by Capt. Margaret Ziffer, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*



Retired 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment Soldiers, sporting their unit colors, embrace each other upon arrival to the 30-year Army Aviation Support Facility #2 celebration held Oct 24, 2015, at the Great Plains Joint Training Center. A few of the retirees oversaw the building of AASF #2 three decades ago. *Photo by Spc. Mikayla Gentine, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

Col. Thomas Burke, foreground, salutes Soldiers with the 69th Troop Command during a change of command ceremony in Topeka, Kansas, Oct. 4, 2015. Burke replaced Col. Roger Murdock, who became commander of the 69th TC in April 2015 and guided its restructure to a brigade-level unit. *Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*



Soldiers of the 235th Regiment render salute to Brig. Gen. Robert Windham, Kansas Army National Guard commander, during a pass in review of troops. Windham was present to honor the change of command of the 235th during a ceremony held on the Officer Candidate School parade field at the Great Plains Joint Training Center in Salina, Kansas, Sept. 19, 2015. *Photo by Sgt. Brandon Jacobs, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*